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Special National Intelligence Estimate
Memorandum to Holders

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Mozambique: Short-Term Prospects

Key Judgments

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SNIE 72.3-85
June 1986

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THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS.

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The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

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MEMORANDUM TO HOLDERS OF SNIE 72.3-85

MOZAMBIQUE: SHORT-TERM PROSPECTS

KEY JUDGMENTS

The full text of this Estimate
is being published separately
with regular distribution.

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SCOPE NOTE

Mozambique's military and economic situation has continued to deteriorate over the past year despite Zimbabwean military support and President Machel's visits to the United States and the Soviet Union to seek increased support. This Memorandum to Holders of SNIE 72.3-85, *Mozambique: Short-Term Prospects*, published in June 1985, updates our assessment of the prospects for the survival of President Machel, the insurgency, Soviet involvement, and implications for the United States over the next 12 months.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

The Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) insurgents will probably intensify their activities throughout the country during the next 12 months, but will not win a military victory or force President Machel's government (FRELIMO) to share power. This means that RENAMO:

- Will probably consolidate and expand its position in central Mozambique, improving its ability to reinforce guerrilla operations in government-held areas to the north and south.
- Will not make major inroads into the government-controlled major cities, or into much of the southern countryside where the Machel government has substantial support.
- Might capture a major garrison or temporarily hold a city, dramatic events that could stimulate isolated mutinies and an increased rate of desertion in Machel's demoralized armed forces.
- May generate sufficient pressure to force Machel to reduce—but not abandon—his opening to the West in an effort to acquire increased Soviet military aid.

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In our judgment, Machel will probably remain in power over the next 12 months despite growing pressures on his regime:

- Machel is a skilled political survivor who retains the loyalty of his FRELIMO colleagues, and they have not yet lost their resolve, despite RENAMO's pressure.
- A successful coup by war-weary Army officers is unlikely for now, but the threat will grow in direct proportion to the deterioration of security, particularly after heavy rains resume in November.
- A successful Soviet-inspired coup is even less likely because Moscow probably will continue to view Machel as a more viable leader than any of his less talented colleagues.

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a breakthrough toward a power-sharing agreement is unlikely as long as neither side is prepared to drop conditions currently unacceptable to the other.

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— Insurgent attacks will continue to block economic recovery, contribute to food shortages, enlarge refugee populations, and render Maputo unable to make principal and interest payments on its foreign debt. [REDACTED]

South Africa will probably not renounce its nonaggression pact with Mozambique, but will continue small amounts of covert aid to RENAMO to maintain influence with the insurgents. Despite the Nkomati agreement, Pretoria will be likely to resume attacks on African National Congress (ANC) targets in Mozambique. Any major escalation of Soviet or Cuban military presence in Mozambique almost certainly would provoke a hostile South African response. [REDACTED]

Zimbabwean forces will probably continue to guard transportation routes in central Mozambique that serve Harare and to carry out limited attacks on insurgent targets nearby. We think it unlikely but possible that Prime Minister Mugabe, in his desire to support the Machel regime, could disregard his military advisers and order new, large counter guerrilla operations and thereby delay RENAMO's expansion, as they did last fall. Harare is concerned about mounting costs and probably realizes that such operations would slow but not reverse rebel advances [REDACTED]

Neither Machel nor Moscow yet views RENAMO as able to threaten the survival of the FRELIMO regime, and Machel remains reluctant to call for Cuban combat ground forces. In the unlikely event that the situation should suddenly deteriorate to the point that the regime were seriously threatened, we believe that Moscow probably would disengage rather than mount a large military intervention—which would have questionable prospects for success, entail high cost, and invite direct confrontation with South Africa. [REDACTED]

In our judgment, the Soviet Union will continue to provide assistance to the Machel government at, or modestly above, present levels over the next year. We believe that the Soviets are pursuing a cautious and incremental approach with Machel that seeks to barter future Soviet military aid for Mozambican concessions. Moscow delivered about \$175 million in arms in 1985, the lowest amount in three years, and only \$55 million in economic assistance. [REDACTED]

US and Western influence in Mozambique will be likely to decline gradually over the next 12 months as Machel turns increasingly to his Soviet allies for military aid to shore up his regime. While Machel was euphoric following his visit to Washington last September, Maputo now considers it overestimated US ability to compel South Africa to fulfill its promises under the Nkomati Accord, and recent US support

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for the Angolan insurgents has increased Mozambican anxiety that the United States will aid RENAMO as well. Moreover, Western economic aid has not met Mozambique's unrealistically high expectations or been enough to cure the country's intractable problems, and the West has furnished only minor military assistance. Some constraints on Mozambique's moving too close to the USSR will nonetheless remain: fear of possible South African reprisals, and, to a lesser degree, the need for US and Western economic aid, in a situation of security and economic deterioration. []

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Implications for the United States of scenarios we consider less likely—a military victory by RENAMO or the government, or a successful coup against President Machel—would appear to be highly contingent upon the following circumstances:

- Whether the fighting ceased, or remnants of the losing side coalesced into a viable insurgency.
- Whether the government in Maputo adopted conciliatory policies, or it sacrificed greater stability and valuable talents by excluding former adversaries.
- Whether South Africa supported the regime, or Pretoria sought to undermine it.
- Whether other neighboring states accepted the Mozambican Government, or they adopted a hostile attitude. []

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Of these possible scenarios, the only one clearly unfavorable to US interests would be a successful leftist coup that ushered in closer Mozambican-Soviet relations and reduced chances for a FRELIMO-RENAMO settlement. National reconciliation—the outcome most favorable to US interests should it prove lasting—is, in our judgment, unlikely over the time period of this Estimate given the intransigence of both the Machel government and RENAMO. Longer term prospects for serious talks between both parties may grow if neither side gains a critical advantage or seems much closer to victory. A coup by more moderate military elements or a RENAMO military victory would appear to have both pluses and minuses for the United States, and the implications for the United States would be largely dependent on the composition and acceptability of the new regime. Least likely, a government military victory would have mixed results. On the one hand, it would appear to validate Soviet military support; on the other hand, peace, if lasting, could bring economic development again to the fore and enhance US and Western leverage. []

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